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Letter dated 18 June 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the fact that relations between Côte d'Ivoire and Angola have entered a new phase of definite improvement.

In this context, it seemed entirely appropriate for us to bring some important information to the attention of the international community.

Accordingly, acting on instructions from my Government I am requesting that the text of this letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Noël E. **Ahipeaud Guébo**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 18 June 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Since the start of the Angolan crisis, which began with the armed rebellion triggered by Jonas Savimbi against the lawful Government of Luanda, the name of Côte d'Ivoire has, rightly or wrongly, regularly been associated with the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and the country has constantly been accused of colluding with it.

It is true that, prompted always by the belief that dialogue is the only sure way to resolve differences between States, and that the policy of the empty chair is the best way of ensuring that positions become hardened and misunderstandings systematized, Côte d'Ivoire has sought to maintain a minimum level of contacts with the movement of Jonas Savimbi.

It should also be pointed out, as noted in the letter dated 3 May 2000 from the Government to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/379), that, as a result of the above-mentioned minimum level of contacts, the Luanda Government has long used Côte d'Ivoire as an intermediary for getting and staying in touch with Jonas Savimbi's UNITA.

The above-mentioned letter also informed you very clearly that, following the signing of the Lusaka agreements and the failure of UNITA to respect their provisions, the Ivorian Government decided to freeze its relations with Mr. Savimbi's organization.

In accordance with this new logic of Ivorian diplomacy, at the invitation of Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, paid a visit of friendship and cooperation to Angola from 28 to 31 May 2001.

It should be noted that, in the context of the talks he had with his Angolan counterpart, President Laurent Gbagbo reaffirmed his wholehearted commitment to the implementation of the sanctions against UNITA and welcomed the measures taken by the United Nations to promote peace in Angola.

He also invited all parties to the conflict to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex) so as to ensure Angola's prompt return to peace and stability.

On the occasion of the speech he delivered before the Angolan National Assembly, the Ivorian Head of State, Laurent Gbagbo, reassured the elected representatives of the Angolan people by proclaiming for all to hear that "Côte d'Ivoire will never again serve as a rear base for UNITA's activities."

Speaking in turn of the Security Council resolutions, President Eduardo dos Santos welcomed the steps taken by the Ivorian authorities to abide by said resolutions in order to help strengthen peace in Angola. One such step resulted from the decision of the new Ivorian authority to withdraw all Ivorian passports which had been issued to the UNITA leadership, effective 30 June 2001.

The effects of the official visit of President Laurent Gbagbo to Angola were not long in coming. For example, UNITA decided to close down the "permanent office" it had maintained in Abidjan for the past 20 years. In fact, Mr. John Kakumba Marquest, "Ambassador" of UNITA to Abidjan, left Côte d'Ivoire for good, as did Mr. Savimbi's eldest sister.